

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 3, 2009

\$1.4 MILLION AVAILABLE FOR FARMLAND PRESERVATION IN TENNESSEE

2009 Signup Deadline Is June 1

(NASHVILLE)—Eligible entities interested in the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) should sign up by the end of May to receive consideration for funding in fiscal year 2009.

FRPP provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranch land in agricultural uses. The USDA partners with State, Tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements from landowners. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market value of the conservation easement, and eligible entities working with landowners provide the remaining 50 percent. Applicants must have an established agricultural land protection program; the authority to hold and manage easements; the capacity to acquire, manage, and enforce the easements; and ability to supply matching funds.

State Conservationist Kevin Brown says the money available for FRPP in Tennessee sets a new record. "Tennessee has been allotted nearly \$1.5 Million to protect farm and ranch lands this year. That is the largest amount we have ever received for this program, so now is the perfect time to apply."

To assist the eligible entities cover their portion of matching funds, landowners can make a 'donation' by accepting less than the appraised value of the easement as compensation for the easement. Eligible entities that partner with the landowner must provide the balance of 50 percent of the appraised fair market value. The eligible entities must provide at least 25 percent of the purchase price (appraised fair market value minus landowner donation) in cash. Only landowners who meet USDA conservation program eligibility requirements (which include an adjusted gross income of less than \$1 million) are eligible.

Land proposed for funding in FRPP must meet one of three eligibility categories: contain at least 50 percent prime and unique farmland soils or soils of Statewide and local importance; include historic or archeological resources; or support the purpose of a State or local farmland protection program. FRPP, which is administered by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), accepts applications for funding on a continuous basis. But applicants who want to be considered for 2009 funds should sign up before June 1st. Fiscal year 2009 funds must be obligated by July 15, 2009.

Application documents can be found on the NRCS-Tennessee website for FRPP at <http://www.tn.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/FRPP/frpp.html>. All requested information should be included in the application or attached as a supplement. Responses are used to rank proposals. Individual parcels will be evaluated for eligibility, with the highest scoring parcels receiving funding. FRPP has enrolled over 620,000 acres on 3,100 farms and ranches nationwide since Congress first authorized the program in 1996. For further information, contact FRPP Coordinator Curt McDaniel at 615-277-2597 or curt.mcdaniel@tn.usda.gov. NRCS is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

X X X

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer